



Arthur Gottlieb

Word Power

They smeared his hair
with honey, staked him
spreadeagle over an anthill
on the desert floor until
insects ate out his eyeballs
before buzzards picked
his brains clean to the bone.

His skull was made into a
paperweight for the police
blotter, his skeleton sent
to a medical school to be studied.
There, even with lips sewn shut
they spoke more eloquently
than the most astute about
the anatomy of injustice
in a tongue all good men understood.

That liberated skeleton danced
into the next generation of saints,
who noted every word and wrote
them down, as the witnessing wind
buried his killers in sandstorms.

Martyrs survive on the wings

of wild fires, and the sun builds
cathedrals with the beams of
their bones.

Arthur Gottlieb has published in many small literary magazines, including *The Alembic*, *Chiron Review*, *The Pacific Review*, and *The Ledge*. He lives in Oregon.